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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000833

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DEPT FOR SCA/INS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: PARTIES RESCHEDULE DEMONSTRATION

REF: A. KATHMANDU 819

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 776

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) According to Party contacts, the seven-party alliance canceled the mass demonstration set for April 8 in Kathmandu, and instead announced that the Parties would hold rallies in the districts April 6-9, in light of transportation difficulties associated with the general strike called during the same period. While Party leaders were privately discussing the idea of making a public commitment through a joint seven-party alliance slogan to generate public support, Maoist second-in-command Baburam Bhattarai discussed in a March 28 op-ed in the vernacular press the need for the Parties and the Maoists to have a united slogan for "democratic movement against the autocratic monarchy." The Maoists continued to clash with government security forces.
End Summary.

New Plan: Rallies in Each District

[1](#)2. (C) On March 27, the Parties announced plans to hold rallies in all 75 districts during the four-day general strike from April 6-9, though details of Party action remained fuzzy. Realizing it would be difficult for party workers to come to Kathmandu during a general strike, the Parties rescheduled the mass rally in Kathmandu originally set for April 8, the anniversary of the 1990 movement in which democracy came to Nepal. The Parties' new plan was to hold a gathering in Kathmandu on or about April 8 similar to rallies in each district. Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) Acting General Secretary Amrit Bohora told the Reporter's Club of Nepal that the changes were made due to the continued violent activities of the Maoists. "Ordinary citizens willing to attend the rally are skeptical about the situation, in case violence continues and the program does not go as expected." He once again urged the Maoists to declare a unilateral cease-fire to facilitate the Parties' plan to hold a mass rally in Kathmandu (ref A). Gopal Man Shrestha, Vice President of the Nepali Congress

(Democratic) Party (NC(D)) told Emboff that the general strike made it impossible for supporters to gather in Kathmandu, so the Parties had canceled the April 8 mass demonstration in Kathmandu, setting no new date at this time.

KP Oli, CPN-UML Central Committee Member similarly told Emboff that recognizing the difficulties of any travel during a general strike, including travel to district headquarters, the Parties were urging their workers to stage demonstrations whenever and wherever possible in the districts during April 6-9, at the discretion of district cadre.

Parties Acknowledge Need for Platform

13. (U) Seven-party alliance leaders met on March 27 to discuss publicly announcing a commitment to "stir the masses and the party cadre alike." CPN-UML leader Bohara stressed the need for the alliance to come up with a "common political demand and slogan" in order to convert the seven-party alliance's actions into a people's movement. He noted that civil society and "common people" were suspicious that the seven-party alliance would strike a compromise with the monarchy. He believed the reason the seven-party alliance had not captured the imagination of the people was because it had not clearly articulated a "common stance on the monarchy." Bohara explained that the alliance needed a clear roadmap to inclusive democracy. On March 28, Maoist second-in-command Baburam Bhattarai published an op-ed in the vernacular daily Kantipur, calling for united Party-Maoist "democratic movement against the autocratic monarchy." He gave no mention of renouncing violence, but noted that although the Parties and the Maoists were not able to have "one slogan, one front, and one program because of many factors, the movement has already become a unified one." He stated, "everyone should give attention to taking the joint movement from April 6 to a decisive point."

Maoist Gathering Sparks RNA Reaction

14. (C) On March 27, as Maoists began a function at Bagh Bhairav Higher Secondary School, a government school in Sindhupalchowk District east of Kathmandu, the Royal Nepalese Army aerially bombarded the gathering. The Defense Ministry issued a press statement claiming that the security forces had retaliated after the Maoists fired indiscriminately at an army helicopter. "Retaliation was necessary for self-defense as well as for one's safety since Maoist activity was also seen on the ground." On March 28, Chief of Army Staff Thapa confirmed to the Ambassador that the RNA had acted on a tip that the Maoists were gathering, and were compelled to return fire after the Maoists fired at the RNA helicopter. (Note: Human Rights Watch had reported indiscriminate RNA aerial bombardment as an ongoing concern as it resulted in disproportional civilian casualties and was thus a violation of international humanitarian law (ref B). End note.) The RNA statement did not mention casualties, but newspapers reported that aerial bombing by the RNA killed four Maoists and one civilian, a security guard of a Japanese journalist. The media reported indiscriminate firing by the RNA severely damaged ten houses near the school. Yagya Adhikari, Deputy Director of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) told Emboff that the NHRC had dispatched a team to the site to investigate and talk to locals and the RNA about the incident. The RNA spokesman told Emboff that the RNA had a team on the ground investigating the incident. Separately, on March 27, Maoists attacked security forces in the mid-western hilly district of Baglung; security forces killed two Maoists. On March 27, Maoists bombed a branch office of the Agriculture Development Bank in far-western Banke District injuring no one, although there were staff in the bank at the time of the blast.

Comment

15. (C) It will be difficult for the government to stop Party demonstrations "wherever and whenever" in the districts

between April 6-9. However, it will also be difficult for the Parties to gain momentum from such small and scattered gatherings, the only kind likely to be possible during the general strike and with the government mobilizing to prevent larger gatherings.

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